

## Introduction

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The book which we present today came into being, like many other books, with a single sentence and a simple idea, written down in 2013 in a research project, stating our wish to organize a conference in Cracow dedicated to the notions of the absurd and revolt in Albert Camus's thought. Like many other books, it is a proof that it is always better to be solidary than solitary, especially with all the support one can get from the people, dedicated to Camus's *œuvre*. The idea developed slowly but gradually and was patiently consulted with Agnès Spiquel, the President of Société des Études Camusiennes, who gave us great encouragement and support to the idea of the conference and the present publication. We also received a great aid from Sophie Bastien and David Sprintzen, as well as members of Albert Camus Society US/UK. Much support came from Polish scholars, Czesława Piecuch, Ignacy S. Fiut and Joanna Hańderek. These wonderful people did not only help in making the 2016 Cracow conference come true – but they also added significantly by helping in the difficult, yet necessary decision-making process of evaluating research proposals, arriving by droves after the announcement of our conference. Our meeting in February was unique by all accounts. The conference, inaugurated by the Dean of Faculty of Philosophy at the Jagiellonian University, Jarosław Górniak, and the wonderful greeting letter from Agnès Spiquel, was – as I see it today – a proof of timeliness of Camus's ideas and a fascinating example of a continuing interest in his profound reflection on modern human condition. The principal aim of our conference was to discuss the philosophical aspects of the two main concepts prevalent in Camus's philosophy: the absurd and revolt, debating on the dynamics of Camus's philosophical journey. Our analysis of the progression of his thought, from the individualized experience and consciousness of the absurd to understanding human

revolt through solidarity seems to me, even after more than 65 years since the publication of Camus's second major philosophical essay, a fertile ground for discussion and finding new answers to questions, evoked by philosophical dilemmas found in Camus's writings.

Our discussions and considerations resulted in this book, which, we have decided to divide into three major parts. The first part of our study harks back at the origins and sources of the Camusian progression from absurd-oriented reflection to his analysis of revolt. Simon Lea in the first chapter goes back to Camus's understanding of indifference in relation to Camusian notion of revolt. In chapter two, Virginie Lupo reaches for *Caligula*, a work signifying the development of Camusian reflection. Chapters three and four both focus on *La Peste* from varying angles, offering, in the study of Marie-Thérèse Blondeau, a profound analysis of engagement, an important aspect of revolt. Eric Berg offers a study of theological aspects of Camus's novel, giving an insightful perspective of Bonhoeffer's conclusions to the dilemmas of Father Paneloux. In chapter five, Christian Chevandier offers an exhaustive account of Camus's intellectual preparation for writing his study of rebellion. Chapter six goes back to the conclusions from Camus's reflection on absurdity and revolt in two essays, *La liberté absurde* and *L'absurde et le meurtre*, and may be considered a brief evaluation of my recent research carried out at the Jagiellonian University.

Part two, dedicated to a contemporary perspective for studies of Camus's thought, opens with the intriguing chapter by Sophie Bastien and Emmanuel Habimana, who present the philosopher's influence by reference to the concept of resilience. In chapter eight, Théodore Caponis offers a fine example of an analytic approach, presenting the role of the notion of "murder" in *L'Homme révolté* by means of the method of semantic fields. Chapter nine, by Tomasso Visone, introduces the contemporary debate on Camus's view on modernity in reference to the famous debate on secularisation thesis. In Chapter ten, Ignacy S. Fiut considers the thought of Camus from the perspective of European universalism. Chapter eleven, by Ewa Średnicka, is a thought-provoking analysis of the idea of justice in Camus's editorials from *Combat*, seen from the complex perspective of his changing attitude during *L'épuration*.

The last part of our study is dedicated to the comparative perspective. Giovanni Gaetani opens this section with his remarkable and well carried out idea to confront Camus's idea of revolt with the presentation of Irish revolutionaries, as presented by Ken Loach in the movie *The Wind That Shakes the Barley*. Chapter thirteen by Raphael Luiz de Araújo offers a convincing study of similarities and differences between Marxist critique, Leszek Kołakowski,

and Camus's idea of revolt. Chapter fourteen by Barbara Zauli is an original attempt at perspective on Camus's Nietzschean sources, whereas in chapter fifteen Marcin Urbaniak presents Colin Wilson's interpretation of Camusian revolt. Chapter sixteen by Justyna Gambert reaches to *La Chute* in an exhaustive study of Iwaszkiewicz's work from 1957, *Wzlot*. The final, concluding chapter by Piotr Mróz and Remigiusz Król presents the "strange spiritual affinity" of Camus and Dostoevsky.

During our editing work for this book, we have received the sorrowful information that late Michel Henri Kowalewicz, a dedicated scholar to the history of ideas, who eagerly contributed to our February discussions in Cracow, had died. It is our deepest regret that He would not be acquainted with the result of our discussions he in so many diverse ways had inspired.

Wishing that our readers find inspiration in this rich and diverse selection of attempts at rethinking Camus's philosophical and literary achievement we would like to thank all our friends and colleagues for their support, help, comments, understanding and kindness. We sincerely hope that the reading of this book will be for you as enriching as it was for us.

Maciej Kałuża, Piotr Mróz  
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